
What is claimed is:

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1 A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
2 method comprising:
3 receiving, in a merchant computer system of the computer network, a purchase
4 request for a digital product;
5 receiving payment data in the merchant system wherein the payment data specifies
6 remuneration for the digital product;
7 requesting reservation of the digital product from a content manager computer
8 system which can be different from the merchant computer system and which is coupled to
9 the content manager computer system through the computer network;
10 receiving, in the content manager computer system, a delivery request signal from
11 the merchant computer system wherein the delivery request signal requests delivery of the
12 digital product to a client computer system through the computer network;
13 sending transaction identification data to the client computer system wherein the
14 transaction identification data identifies the digital product and represents remuneration in
15 accordance with the payment data;
16 receiving, in a delivery computer system of the computer network, the transaction
17 identification data from the client computer system;
18 determining within the delivery computer system, in accordance with the
19 transaction identification data, the digital product; and
20 sending, from the delivery computer system, the digital product to the client
21 computer system.

1 2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 sending, from the delivery computer system to the content manager computer
3 system, a signal indicating that sending the digital product to the client computer system is

4 completed.

1 3. The method of Claim 2 further comprising:
2 recording, by the content manager computer system, purchase data identifying the
3 digital product and indicating that the digital product was purchased.

1 4. The method of Claim 3 further comprising:
2 sending, by the content manager computer system, the purchase data to a media
3 licensing computer system such that the media licensing computer system can apportion
4 compensation for sales of the digital product.

5 5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising:
6 aggregating purchase data from the content manager computer system and other
7 purchase data from one or more other content manager computer systems to form
8 aggregated purchase data; and
9 sending the aggregated purchase data to a rights agent computer system such that
10 the rights agent computer system can apportion compensation for sales of the digital
11 product.

12 6. The method of Claim 3 wherein recording the purchase data comprises:
13 encrypting the purchase data in such a manner that data held secret by the media
14 licensing computer system is required for decrypting the purchase data.

1 7. The method of Claim 6 wherein encrypting the purchase data is performed in such
2 a manner that modification of the purchase data subsequent to the encrypting can be detected.

1 8. The method of Claim 6 wherein encrypting the purchase data is performed in such
2 a manner that removal of the purchase data from a sequence of purchase data records subsequent

3 to the encrypting can be detected.

1 9. The method of Claim 1 wherein sending the digital product from the delivery
2 computer system to the client computer system comprises:
3 creating a new encryption key which is intended to be used only once;
4 encrypting the digital product with the new encryption key to form an encrypted
5 digital product;
6 sending the encrypted digital product to the client computer system;
7 decrypting the encrypted digital product within the client computer system to
8 recover the digital product; and
9 discarding the new encryption key.

10 10. The method of Claim 1 wherein requesting reservation by the merchant computer
11 system comprises:
12 encrypting data representing a requested reservation;
13 sending the data as encrypted to the content manager computer system; and
14 decrypting the data within the content manager computer system.

15 11. The method of Claim 1 wherein, in response to requesting reservation by the
16 merchant computer system, the content manager computer system effects such a reservation of
17 the digital product by:
18 forming transaction data which include (i) the transaction identification data, (ii)
19 product identification data which identifies the digital product, and (iii) binding data which
20 binds the transaction to the client computer system; and
21 sending the transaction data to the merchant computer system.

22 12. The method of Claim 11 wherein sending the transaction identification data
23 comprises encrypting the transaction identification data.

1 13. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 sending, from the merchant computer system, the payment data to a payment
3 authority; and
4 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the payment authority, payment
5 authorization data.

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7 14. The method of Claim 13 further comprising:
8 sending the payment authorization data to the content manager computer system.

1 15 The method of Claim 14 wherein sending the payment authorization data
2 comprises:
3 encrypting the payment authorization data.

4 16. The method of Claim 14 further comprising:
5 recording, by the content manager computer system, that payment for the digital
6 product has been authorized.

7 17. The method of Claim 16 further comprising:
8 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the content manager computer
9 system, acknowledgment data which indicates that payment for the digital product has
10 been recorded.

11 18. The method of Claim 17 wherein the acknowledgment data includes the
12 transaction identification data and a payment authorization token which identifies payment
13 authorization as recorded by the content manager computer system.

14 19. The method of Claim 18 wherein the delivery request signal includes the

1 transaction identification data and the delivery authorization token.

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3 20. The method of Claim 19 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
4 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
5 identification data and the delivery authorization token.

1 21. The method of Claim 17 wherein the acknowledgment data is encrypted.

1 22. The method of Claim 1 wherein the delivery request signal is received in the
2 content manager computer system from the client computer system; and
3 further wherein the delivery request signal is generated by the client computer
4 system in response to user-generated control signals.

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7 23. The method of Claim 22 wherein the user-generated control signals are incident to
8 a graphical user interface of a web browser; and
9 further wherein the user-generated control signals cause the client computer
10 system to send the delivery request signal to the merchant computer system which in turn
11 communicates the delivery request signal to the content manager computer system.

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14 24. The method of Claim 1 wherein the delivery request signal includes the transaction
15 identification data.

1 25. The method of Claim 24 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
2 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
3 identification data.

1 26. The method of Claim 1 wherein the transaction identification data, as received by
2 the delivery computer system is certified as originating from the client computer system.

1 27. The method of Claim 26 wherein the transaction identification data is certified by
2 signing of the transaction identification data using asymmetric-key encryption.

1 28. The method of Claim 1 wherein the digital product includes a digitized audio
2 signal.

1 29. The method of Claim 28 wherein the digital product includes a selection of one or
2 more musical pieces.

1 30. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes textual data
2 representing lyrics of the one or more musical pieces.

1 31. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing liner notes of the one or more musical pieces.

1 32. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing artist credits of the one or more musical pieces.

1 33. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further include textual data
2 representing critical commentary of the one or more musical pieces.

1 34. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes one or more
2 graphical images of album artwork to accompany the one or more musical pieces.

1 35. The method of Claim 29 wherein the digital product further includes one or more
2 graphical images of advertisement artwork to accompany the one or more musical pieces.

1 36. The method of Claim 35 wherein the advertisement artwork is selected specifically
2 for the client computer system.

1 37. The method of Claim 36 wherein the advertisement artwork is selected specifically
2 for the client computer system in accordance with information of the user of the client computer
3 system.

1 38. The method of Claim 37 wherein the information of the user is demographic.

2 39. A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
3 method comprising:
4 receiving, in a merchant computer system of the computer network, a purchase
5 request for a digital product;
6 receiving payment data in the merchant system wherein the payment data specifies
7 remuneration for the digital product;
8 requesting reservation of the digital product from a content manager computer
9 system which can be different from the merchant computer system and which is coupled to
10 the content manager computer system through the computer network;
11 receiving, from the content manager computer system, voucher data which is
12 readable by the content manager computer system and which represents to the content
13 manager computer system a transaction in which the remuneration specified by the
14 payment data is exchanged for the digital product.

1 40. The method of Claim 39 further comprising:
2 receiving, from the content manager computer system, inventory data which
3 specifies available digital products, including the digital product, and specified
4 remuneration to the content manager computer system for each of the available digital
5 products.

- 1 41. The method of Claim 40 wherein requesting reservation comprises:
2 encrypting data representing a requested reservation;
3 sending the data as encrypted to the content manager computer system; and
4 decrypting the data within the content manager computer system.
- 1 42. The method of Claim 40 further comprising:
2 sending, from the merchant computer system, the payment data to a payment
3 authority; and
4 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the payment authority, payment
5 authorization data.
- 1 43. The method of Claim 42 further comprising:
2 sending the payment authorization data to the content manager computer system.
- 1 44. The method of Claim 43 wherein sending the payment authorization data
2 comprises:
3 encrypting the payment authorization data.
- 1 45. The method of Claim 44 further comprising:
2 receiving, in the merchant computer system from the content manager computer
3 system, acknowledgment data which indicates that payment for the digital product has
4 been recorded.
- 1 46. The method of Claim 45 wherein the acknowledgment data includes the
2 transaction identification data and a payment authorization token which identifies payment
3 authorization as recorded by the content manager computer system.

1 47. The method of Claim 46 wherein the delivery request signal includes the
2 transaction identification data and the payment authorization token.

1 48. The method of Claim 47 wherein the delivery request signal is generated in
2 response to selection of a URL by the user wherein the URL specifies the transaction
3 identification data and the payment authorization token.

1 49. The method of Claim 45 wherein the acknowledgment data is encrypted.

1 50. A method for conducting electronic commerce through a computer network, the
2 method comprising:

3 conducting a purchase phase of a transaction within a first computer system coupled to the
4 computer network wherein the purchase phase includes selection of a digital product for purchase
5 and authorization of payment for the digital product; and

6 conducting a delivery phase of the transaction within a second computer system which is
7 coupled to the first computer system through the computer network wherein the delivery phase
8 includes